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TREES, SNAKES AND GODS IN ANCIENT SYRIA AND ANATOLIA¹

By W. G. LAMBERT

For too long study of ancient Near Eastern representational art and study of possibly related texts have been entirely separate disciplines, the one a branch of archaeology, the other of philology. This accounts for the very scanty results obtained and their frequently questionable character. In the case of Classical Greece and Rome art historians ordinarily command Greek and Latin so as to use written sources at first hand, but Near Eastern archaeologists have commonly been illiterate in their fields of study, while philologists often have limited knowledge of art and use that very amateurishly. Thus it is an occasion for rejoicing that a serious attempt has just been made on some very difficult material from Syria and Anatolia, and that one major break-through has resulted which opens up prospects of fuller understanding of certain aspects of ancient art. The author, E. Williams-Forte, is primarily an art historian with a speciality in ancient Near Eastern seals, and she has taken an interest in Ugaritic to be able to exploit that material. Her Columbia Ph.D. thesis: *Mythic cycles: the iconography of the gods of water and weather in Syria and Anatolia during the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 2000–1600 B.C.)* has not been published, but a lengthy article derived from parts of it has recently appeared.² This starts from the tree and snake in the garden of Eden and investigates their possible Canaanite background. The original observation of major importance is that the storm god of Syria and Anatolia of the first half of the second millennium B.C., Anatolian Tarhunna, Syrian Hadad or Baal, Mesopotamian Adad, occasionally holds up a plant, branch or tree as a symbol.³ This is entirely explicable from his sending down rain to the earth by which plants are nourished. More commonly, as is well known, he holds forked lightning, a symbol of the rain-bringing storm, and with this symbol he is common in contemporary Mesopotamian art also. The storm god is well known to have been one of the highest gods in the pantheons of northern Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine and Anatolia, and this plant or tree can now be seen as a forerunner of the stylized tree ubiquitous in Mitanni art, which is found from Western Iran to the Mediterranean during the third quarter of the second millennium. There is good reason to consider it a divine symbol rather than an item of decoration alone because on seals it is so commonly held by one or two figures. On faience seals these figures are generally either nude and kneeling, or clothed and either standing or sitting. The nude figures in fact wear a double-stranded belt which is visible in clear examples, and this shows that they are derived historically from the

¹ See p. 612 below. The writer thanks O. R. Gurney, D. Collon and J. E. Reade for comments and suggestions. However, it must not be assumed that they necessarily agree with everything contained in this article.

² E. Williams-Forte, 'The snake and the tree in the iconography and texts of Syria during the Bronze Age', in L. Gurelik and E. Williams-Forte (ed.), *Ancient seals and the Bible* (see the review below, p. 612), 18–43.

³ See Williams-Forte's figs. 4–11 and 13–15, to which add: N. Özgüç, *The Anatolian Group of cylinder seal impressions from Kültepe* (cited henceforth 'Özgüç'), no. 7 and C.F.-A. Schaeffer-Forrer, *Corpus des cylindres-sceaux de Ras Shamra-Ugarit et d'Enkomi-Alasia*, 1, 62, Chypre A9. Note also the tree abutting Baal's shoulder in B. Parker, *Iraq*, 11, 1949, pl. ii, no. 8. Though we often call this symbol a tree, we do not thereby commit ourselves to its being a tree rather than a branch or plant.

Old Akkadian hero with six curls, the *lahmu*, a type of minor god.⁴ Of the clothed figures, a single one could represent the storm god himself, but a pair would have to be either minor gods or priests.⁵ On stone seals with their greater detail the storm god is usually identified without difficulty throughout these areas. In Anatolia the earliest evidence comes from a group of seal impressions on cuneiform tablets of the Assyrian merchants. While using a large quantity of motifs of Mesopotamian origin, they exploit it in a context of Anatolian religions. Thus the gods are shown clothed as Mesopotamian gods, though very off-beat in detail, but the storm god is easily identified from the bull he rides or holds back with reins, the forked lightning or 'tree' he holds as an identifying symbol, and a raised weapon he often brandishes.⁶ In Syria in addition to the forked lightning or 'tree', bull and raised weapon, he has a characteristic dress: short kilt and spiked helmet, with long plait down the back.⁷ This Syrian style Hadad is also known from second-millennium Hittite art, but with tall, often horned, headdress instead of spiked helmet.

The various marks identifying the storm god have been known for long and there is no question about him in this respect, but the symbolism still needs study. Thus according to Williams-Forte use of the bull is partly due to 'that fertile animal's role as the means of propagation and thus perpetuation of the herds' (p. 24).⁸ This view arises from the modern term 'fertility', beloved of historians of religion but not so easily found in the ancient texts. In Akkadian, the best documented language of the ancient Near East, the obvious words which spring to mind in this connexion are *nuššu*, *tuhdu* and *hegallu*, which refer to abundance of water and profusion of plant life, and are often found in association with Adad, but are not used for fecundity of domestic animals. The root *dš*' covers all kinds of profusion, animal, vegetable or liquid, though even this does not quite equal the modern 'fertility' in lacking any sexual overtones. In Akkadian literature there is common allusion to Adad's sending rain, but the present writer has not seen any passage which refers to Adad's responsibility for impregnating herds of cows. The Babylonians were of course very familiar with animal husbandry, and worshipped gods who were concerned with this, namely Amurru and Šakkan, so the lack of this attribute from Adad is significant. Syrian and Anatolian religions may have been different in this matter, but until some specific evidence is forthcoming caution must be maintained. In Akkadian texts Adad is a bull because his roaring was the thunder that brought rain.⁹

With the appearing of Mitanni art in the middle of the second millennium and the consequent gradual disappearance of Syrian art, the very distinctive Syrian Hadad likewise generally disappears. The god himself lost nothing in importance under the Mitanni empire, so art should be scanned for signs of him.

⁴ For the Mitanni type see e.g. Briggs Buchanan, *Catalogue of ancient Near Eastern seals in the Ashmolean Museum*, I, Cylinder seals, nos. 926-33. On the *lahmu*, see the fundamental article of F. A. M. Wiggermann, 'Exit Talim!' (*JEOL*, 27, 1983, 90-105). Already in the Akkad period these minor gods hold up symbols while kneeling, see e.g. G. A. Eisen, *OIP*, 47, no. 35. See further the writer, 'The pair *lahmu-lahmu* in cosmology', *Or.*, 54, 1985, 189 ff.

⁵ Single seated figure: e.g. C. F.-A. Schaeffer-Forrer, op. cit., 139, R.S. 24.155; two standing figures: e.g. op. cit., 123, R.S. 21.16.

⁶ See Özgüç *passim*.

⁷ See A. Vanel, *L'Iconographie du dieu de l'orage*, ch. v.

⁸ The Baal myth passage from Ras Shamra (*KTU*, 1.5 v 18 ff.), in which Baal impregnates a cow 88 times, has been alleged as evidence of his fertility, but when only a single offspring resulted it would be more logical to argue the opposite: that Baal is shown to be singularly lacking in fertility! On a more serious level the passage is irrelevant, and a further evidence of the confusion brought about by the misuse of the term 'fertility'.

⁹ Adad is 'the bull of the skies' (*šu-ur ša-ma-a-i*: *CT*, 15 4 3) and his voice is thunder, see *rigim Adad* in the Akkadian lexica.

Forked lightning, save for rare examples,¹⁰ is no longer used. Also seals, the main surviving body of material, do not usually show gods mounted on symbolic animals. Thus the ubiquitous stylized tree,¹¹ as already noted, must be the symbol of Teshub in Mitanni art, and when, for example, a single standing figure in divine garb and with the horned tiara of divinity is shown holding it, presumably that is Teshub himself.¹²

There is little evidence from Syria and Anatolia for the last two centuries of the second millennium, but in Babylonia under the second Isin dynasty (c. 1156–1024 B.C.), the only common seal type shows a distinctive stylized tree and a prancing animal, most commonly a bull. The Babylonian seals commonly have rows of triangles along the upper and lower borders, imitating gold caps with triangular patches of granulation.¹³ There is a south-west Iranian equivalent of this type of seal, but lacking the borders of triangles.¹⁴ The high stylization of the tree and heraldic pose of the animals certainly suggest a symbolic content, and the god Adad is the only obvious and likely referent. He was less popular in southern Mesopotamia than in northern Mesopotamia, Syria and Anatolia, because farming in the south does not depend on rain. Attempts to maintain his northern status were made by giving him control of subterranean water (properly Ea's domain),¹⁵ and the personal names 'Adad is king/lord of the gods' appear in both the Old Babylonian and Cassite periods.¹⁶ So far as is known, there was no special attachment to him under the second Isin dynasty, indeed that was the period when Marduk officially became head of the pantheon.¹⁷ However, Nebuchadnezzar I does pray to Adad of Babylon and ascribes his victories to him in a bilingual text on a stone tablet.¹⁸ One could have expected him to ascribe victories to Marduk, the newly proclaimed head of the pantheon, but perhaps in Nebuchadnezzar's view Adad was a form of Marduk. Enūma Eliš gives Adad as Marduk's 47th name (VII 119–22), with emphasis on rain-giving. Adad's temple in Babylon, Enamḫe, could have been understood as a subordinate shrine of Marduk. Thus it is entirely possible that this second Isin dynasty tree was a symbol of the storm god.

¹⁰ E. Porada, *Corpus of ancient Near Eastern Seals in North American collections: the collection of the Pierpont Morgan Library* (henceforth: *CANES*), no. 1020.

¹¹ H. Danthine, *Le Palmier-Dattier et les arbres sacrés dans l'iconographie de l'Asie occidentale ancienne* (1937) contains a lot of material and a summary of opinions, but mixes up too many entirely diverse things to have any serious value as original interpretation. The more recent work of C. Kepinski, *L'Arbre stylisé en Asie occidentale au 2^e millénaire avant J.-C.* (1982) is restricted to one millennium, but the concentration on form and exclusion of function and meaning again results in unrelated items being thrown together. The Middle Assyrian tree with the bent trunk, however stylized in depiction, is usually meant as a real tree in a landscape. The common Mitanni stylized tree is a symbol not meant as a real tree in a landscape. The purpose of this book would have been clearer had the title read: *Les Arbres stylisés* . . . H. York, 'Heiliger Baum' in *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, IV, 269–82, offers a useful survey of the material with bibliography, but does not take up seriously problems of significance.

¹² e.g. E. Porada, *AASÖR*, 24, nos. 98–9; O. Weber, *Altorientalische Siegelbilder*, 473.

¹³ See pro tem. the author, *Syria* 58, 1981, 175¹.

¹⁴ P. Amiet, *Glyptique susienne*, nos. 2121–4.

¹⁵ cf. *bēl nag-bi ū zu-un-ni* 'lord of abyss and rain' (*BBSt*, no. 6 ii 41). H. J. Deighton, *The 'Weather-God' in Hittite Anatolia* (BAR International Series, 143), develops the thesis that the Anatolian storm god controlled springs and fountains and was not in reality a storm god. Some evidence in favour of this view is presented, but since in the Hittite-Hattian myth 'The Moon that fell from Heaven' ʾU is concerned with thunder, rain and wind, a balanced view must accept both aspects. The term 'weather-god' should certainly be abandoned as mistranslation by assonance of the German *Wettergott*. Sunshine is as much weather as rain!

¹⁶ For Old Babylonian examples see W. Sommerfeld, *Der Aufstieg Marduks*, 72 f.; for later examples see the writer, *BSOAS*, XLVII, 1, 1984, 3.

¹⁷ See W. Sommerfeld, *op. cit.*, and the review article cited in the last footnote.

¹⁸ *BiOr*, 7, 1950, 42 ff.

The better-known first millennium sacred tree is altogether more obscure. It occurs very frequently in the palace reliefs of Ashurnasirpal II at Nimrud,¹⁹ and in such profusion and position that it can hardly be a symbol of Adad. Only Ashur or perhaps Ninurta could be considered. Commonly there is a standing genie each side holding up to it fir cone (?) and bucket.²⁰ We take the view that these creatures function as pollinators, and that the tree was considered a palm.²¹ Palm trees needed artificial pollination to give the best yield. These pollinators also appear in the same reliefs either side of the king (always with bucket, variously with or without cones) and flanking entrances (with or without cones as for the king). Thus the cones (?) were considered essential for the tree, but not for the king or at entrances. Clearly the action of the genies should not be pressed in its natural sense. Palms may need pollination, but not the king or his visitors. We suggest that the fertility of palms was understood in a figurative sense of prosperity and success. Such a concept is well known in late second- and first-millennium Babylonia and Assyria. Figurines buried at entrances are inscribed: 'Uproot disease, enter, Mešrû',²² a term translated 'wealth, prosperity, riches' by the *CAD*, also used as a poetic name of the palm tree. Thus it is argued that this stylized tree did not, in Ashurnasirpal's palace, symbolize any particular deity, but was similar to the Roman's *bona Fortuna*.

First-millennium cylinder seals support this interpretation. A few show the tree being pollinated, as in the Assyrian palace reliefs.²³ But the vast majority show the tree immediately under the winged solar disc. Occasionally there is a bust in the disc, less frequently two minor busts in addition, one to either side.²⁴ The juxtaposition of tree beneath disc already occurs in Mitanni art, but there the squeezing of the maximum number of items in the available space and the overwhelming desire for symmetry and artistic effect allow the possibility of interpreting the two items separately.²⁵ In any case the juxtaposing is not

¹⁹ J. B. Stearns, *Afo*, Beiheft 15, pls. 85–91. See also J. Meuszyński, *Die Rekonstruktion der Reliefdarstellungen*, pls. 1–17.

²⁰ The kneeling genies in contrast cosset the trees with their bare hands. Since this action does not appear elsewhere, e.g. in glyptic, it may be a secondary, local variation.

²¹ One may ask whether the Mitanni seal rolled on a fourteenth-century Middle Assyrian tablet from Assur (O. Weber, *Altorientalische Siegelbilder*, no. 470 = A. Moortgat, *ZA*, 47, 1942, 85, Abb. 76) does not anticipate the first millennium pollination. A typical 'elaborate style' stylized tree has two bunches of dates added, and to its right stands a figure with a kind of bucket in one hand and a piece of vegetation in the other. This latter appears elsewhere without any associated date palm (e.g. Briggs Buchanan, *Early Near Eastern seals in the Yale Babylonian Collection*, no. 1276), but nevertheless, it can be argued that in the Mitanni seal pollination is meant, and the dates were added to make clear that the tree was understood as a date palm.

²² *KAR*, 298 rev. 9–10 = O. R. Gurney, *AAA*, 22, 1935, 70–71.

²³ e.g. *CANES*, 770; *Iraq*, 41, pl. ix 78; O. White Muscarella (ed.), *Ladders to Heaven*, no. 104; U. Moortgat-Correns, *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, 3. Folge, 6 22 no. 38; *PBS*, XIV, no. 598; L. Delaporte, *Musée du Louvre, Catalogue des cylindres*, II, A 723; M. de Clercq and J. Menant, *Collection de Clercq, Catalogue méthodique et raisonné*, I, 341–3, 346: all most likely Babylonian rather than Assyrian.

²⁴ W. G. Lambert, *Iraq*, 41, 1979, 35–6.

²⁵ Though the winged solar disc in Near Eastern art is of Egyptian origin, its placing above a stylized tree is not, so the origin of the combined motif has to be sought in Asia. We suggest that the origin is to be found in standards on poles. The so-called gate-post is often held as a symbol in Akkadian glyptic: a pole with extras at the top (e.g. R. M. Boehmer, *Die Entwicklung*, Abb. 499–502, 518, 520, 522–524, etc.). Rarely in Akkadian and Ur III glyptic other symbols appear on top of poles (op. cit., Abb. 158; Briggs Buchanan, op. cit., 601–2), but in Old Babylonian seals the symbol on a pole ('standard') is much more common (*CANES*, 296, 297, 325, 351, 354, 358, 366, 384, 388, 414, 435, 451, 458, etc.). Of these Old Babylonian standards, that with a lionhead either side of a central macehead (op. cit., 351, etc.) often rests on a pole whose representation is decorated with diagonal hatching. In Syria the urge for greater decorative effect resulted in fancier poles to support symbols, among which the winged solar disc appears (e.g. op. cit., 955, 957). At times these Syrian supports could best be termed columns, and some are so fancy as to suggest trees (e.g. O. White Muscarella (ed.), op. cit., no. 214; Briggs Buchanan, op. cit., no. 1271;

particularly common, and worshippers are not adoring this combination of motifs.²⁶ In the first-millennium seals the winged disc and tree are clearly one combined symbol. Ropes often hang from the disc, which worshippers, one either side, grip. Thus the disc is not, as in presentation scenes, an extra item unrelated to the main scene. The disc is well known to represent a god, the sun god Šamaš at first, but later in Assyria it is apparently used for the national god Aššur.²⁷ The sun god continued to be a popular god throughout the first millennium, but the popularity of the disc is such that one may wonder whether in Babylonia it did not represent Marduk (called 'the sun god of the gods' by Babylonian theologians).²⁸ The first two groups of seals are the Neo-Assyrian linear style (*CANES*, 640-47, etc.) and the Neo-Babylonian early cut style (op. cit., 726-31, etc.),²⁹ both c. 900-800 B.C. In both styles there is characteristically a figure either side. The Assyrian figures hold the ropes from the disc, the Babylonian figures normally kneel with hands outstretched in the attitude of adoration normal for this period. Thus it would appear that the disc is being worshipped and that the tree is a supporting property, a sign of the blessings which flow from the deity above. Later modelled style scenes, both Assyrian and Babylonian so far as can be ascertained (op. cit., 771-5, etc.), may show the busts in the winged disc and may have two bull men supporting it, worshippers and pollinators. The stylized tree can be replaced by a realistic palm, though this is rare (op. cit., 774, etc.). It might be argued that two deities are represented: the sun above and the storm god below. Šamaš and Adad were worshipped together as the givers of oracles, but only in the second millennium, Šamaš alone was the giver of oracles in the first millennium.³⁰ Also, when worship of two deities together, in anthropomorphic form, is seen on first-millennium seals, it is regularly one male and one female, so spouses.³¹ There is thus no good reason to take the first-millennium stylized tree in Mesopotamia as a symbol of a particular god. It seems rather to symbolize the blessings which

L. Delaporte, *Catalogue des cylindres... de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (henceforth: *BN*), nos. 466-7), and in other cases can only be described as stylized trees (e.g., loc. cit., 435). Thus when one finds a more or less naturalistic palm tree under a winged solar disc (Muscarella, op. cit., 215), the pattern is derived from a symbol on a pole, but the motif has been expanded into a real tree with superimposed disc. Note that a presumably Old Babylonian terracotta (M.-T. Barrelet, *Figurines et reliefs en terre cuite de la Mésopotamie antique*, I, no. 815) shows a solar disc (without wings) mounted on the trunk of a palm tree.

²⁶ Note from Nuzi: E. Porada, *AASOR*, 24, no. 92; from Assur: T. Beran, *ZA*, 52, 1957, 144, Abb. 3 and 189, Abb. 84; *BN*, 468. There is no certainty in this last example that the figures either side of the tree and winged disc are worshipping them. By the direction of their faces they seem to be showing respect to each other.

²⁷ In groups of symbols in Late Assyrian royal sculptures it certainly represents Šamaš, from Ashurnasirpal II see e.g. *Propyläen Kunstgeschichte*, xiv, pl. 197, but when in the same king's reliefs the winged disc with bust appears (never in a group of symbols), e.g., op. cit., pls. 198 and 203a, it is hard to see it as other than a symbol of Aššur. In the last case it is placed above the head of the advancing king, and the bust, like the king, is shooting an arrow. Though the king's inscriptions refer to his conquering 'with the help of Šamaš and Adad' (e.g. *AKA*, 179 18), other passages name Aššur alone: 'with the help of Aššur, his lord' (e.g. op. cit., 177 4).

²⁸ e.g. Enūma Eliš, I 102. Also two late compilations explain Šamaš as a name of Marduk: 'Šamaš is Marduk of justice' (*CT*, 24 50, BM 47406 obv. 9) and 'Šamaš is Marduk of the law suit' (*Afo*, 19 115, C 5, comm.).

²⁹ While every one is agreed that these are Babylonian, there appears to be no direct evidence supporting this conclusion, and it appears that none of this type have been excavated at Babylon Ur or Uruk.

³⁰ The earlier *tamītu* texts, addressed to Šamaš and Adad, are represented in late Assyrian times by similar texts addressed to Šamaš alone. They are published by J. A. Knudtzon, *Assyrische Gebete an den Sonnengott*, and E. G. Klauber, *Politisch-Religiöse Texte aus der Sargonidenzeit*. A new edition is in preparation by I. Starr.

³¹ These are mostly in the early Neo-Assyrian drilled style: *CANES*, 691, 693-5; *BN*, 354, 355, 357; etc.

flow from worship of a particular deity. The rarity with which the tree alone receives human adoration confirms this point.³²

Though the precise shapes of the Middle Babylonian, Neo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian trees are inadequate in themselves to prove influence from the Mitanni tree, which itself has two particular characteristic forms: a simpler on faience and a more complex on stone, the period at which the tree becomes popular in Mesopotamian art, and the lack of allusions to this tree in Babylonian and Assyrian religious texts or texts with information on religious matters, strongly support the idea that the motif was borrowed from the culture of Northern Mesopotamia, Syria and Anatolia where it was a symbol of the storm god.³³

Against this background, where does the tree of life in Genesis fit, if it does? Two trees are in fact specified in the garden of Eden: the tree of life, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. There is a well-known awkwardness about the mention of sometimes one, sometimes the other, and many scholars consider the latter original, and the tree of life an editorial expansion. But the former is in fact in the only surviving text, and must be considered. The meaning of tree 'of life' is made clear in Genesis 3: 22: its fruit would confer eternal life on the eater. This is entirely distinct from any other function of a sacred tree in the ancient Near East.³⁴ A development could be imagined from fertility of plants to fertility of animals and man, and so to long life and immortality, but the Biblical context offers otherwise only the tree of knowledge of good and evil, which is unrelated to any simple or stretched notion of fertility. Also, it must be observed that any ancient Near Eastern garden could be expected to have some trees in it, quite apart from antecedent religious symbolism. Thus there is little encouragement to imagine hypothetical bridges between profusion of plant life and human immortality, unless some new evidence attesting them comes to light.

Baal and a snake are attested more explicitly in both glyptic and literature. Both Anatolian-style seals from Kültepe impressions (c. 1900–1750 B.C.) and Syrian seals (c. 1900–1600 B.C.) show Baal or a cognate deity spearing, having subdued or killed, and associated with a fully naturalistic snake. Williams-Forte has collected more examples than previously noted and has offered precise interpretations of them. Her work in this branch of ancient art was known previously from a Metropolitan Museum of Art catalogue, *Ancient Near Eastern seals: a selection of stamp and cylinder seals from the collection of Mrs. William H. Moore* (1976) and from the partial catalogue of the Borowski collection: O. White Muscarella (ed.), *Ladders to Heaven* (1981). She has done some excellent work in advancing understanding of the meaning of the ancient seal designs, but it seems to us that occasionally she over-interprets the evidence. The question always is how far the various items shown on a single seal are related to each

³² Only BN, 383; de Clercq, I, 343 and 346; and U. Moortgat-Correns, *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, 3. Folge, 6 22, no. 38, have been noted.

³³ Sidney Smith thought he had found written allusions, but this is not so. See S. M. Paley, *King of the world*, 23–24.

³⁴ The closest parallel is the 'plant' (*šammu*) which Gilgameš plucked from deep in the Apsû according to the Babylonian *Gilgameš Epic*, XI, 266 ff. Eating this plant provided rejuvenation, as shown when, in the story, the snake swallowed it and sloughed its skin. However, the differences are considerable. It grew deep under water (Honor Frost identifies it as black coral), not in a garden on land; it was a plant, not a tree; one ate the plant and not its fruit; and the eating provided a single rejuvenation, not immortality. Since this plant grew under water it is most unlikely that it served as the symbol of the storm god, whose outpourings nourished the vegetation on earth. The Akkadian phrase *šammu balāfi* does not mean 'plant of life', which can then be stretched to 'tree of life', but 'curative drug'.

other. It will be everywhere agreed that sometimes they are related, sometimes not. For example, in a presentation scene a standing deity or human is introduced to a seated deity by a minor deity. The three figures compose one scene. However, in the sky above them there may appear a crescent and one or both of two distinct discs, which represent the moon god, sun god and Inanna/Ištar, respectively. These astral symbols, of which one, two or all three may appear, are unrelated to the introduction scene beneath. If, for example, only the lunar crescent appears, it does not serve to identify any of the major figures as the moon god. Apparently the astral symbols are in the nature of filling motifs and serve to bring the presence of the signified gods into the seal and its use, whatever may be the meaning of the main scene. Where the ancient seal cutters had a *horror vacui* and fill every possible gap with something, as is the case with the Anatolian and Syrian seals involved here, it is much harder to judge what is related conceptually and what is placed in position to gratify some artistic sense. Presumably the ancient craftsmen and their clients understood the meaning (if there were one) of all the items used, and so did not need to have a lucid arrangement which would help to make the designs self-explanatory for posterity. Williams-Forte relates more things in these seals than we consider demonstrably correct, and draws conclusions from juxtaposing which may result from the artist's sense of propriety alone.

The clearest of the scenes of concern are those on Syrian seals showing Baal spearing a normal snake with a normal spear.³⁵ The god may stand with one foot on each of two mountains, or he may be standing on flat earth, as it were. Rarely, the 'spear' above the hand holding it is Baal's plant or tree,³⁶ which is reminiscent of Baal's spear on the famous stele from Ras Shamra, the shaft of which resembles a trimmed tree or branch.³⁷ On seals one could question whether it really is such an impractical weapon. It could be argued that, due to the small scale, an actual spear is meant by the rod beneath the hand, and the flourishing vegetation above is meant as an entirely separate symbol: their ends are not depicted. In favour of this interpretation, cases where Baal holds in the same hand forked lightning above and the reins of his bull beneath may be cited.³⁸ One does not normally see the end of the lightning below, or the end of the reins above the hand. This is due entirely to the small scale of the depiction and no one so far has suggested that the lightning is the other end of the reins. On the Ras Shamra stele, however, the thorough trimming of the upper portion suggests the tree has been hacked to make it appear a more plausible end of the

³⁵ G. A. Eisen, *OIP*, 47, no. 158 = E. Williams-Forte, *The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Ancient Near Eastern Seals: A selection of stamp and cylinder seals from the collection of Mrs. William H. Moore*, no. 34; also MMA, 68.57.1 (unpublished, see the note on the last cited reference at the end under 'NO. 34', and p. 28⁵⁷ of Williams-Forte's article in *Ancient seals and the Bible*), and *Collection de Clercq*, I, 295.

³⁶ Williams-Forte, op. cit., p. 40, figs. 8-10. However, the drawing of the Louvre seal in fig. 9 somewhat distorts. On the photograph of the impression in Delaporte's *Louvre Catalogue*, II, A 918, the trunk of the tree is not in line with the snake's open mouth, and it does not continue below the hand that holds it, while something projects from the snake's open mouth, apparently a forked tongue. The drawing of fig. 8 also indicates the tree's continuing through the holding hand into the snake's open mouth, but although the alignment is correct in this case, there is in fact a rough break in the surface of the stone between the hand and the snake's head (confirmed by autopsy with powerful lenses), so the point of contact (if any) is lost. The third seal presented as showing this feature, fig. 10, is only known from the drawing offered. It appears to show quite clearly the snake being speared, though the angle of the tree and that of the object spearing the snake below the hand is not quite the same.

³⁷ Williams-Forte, op. cit., p. 42, fig. 15. and often reproduced.

³⁸ Özgüç, nos. 11-13, etc.

spear. Williams-Forte, accepting without discussion that a single object is meant, calls it 'the lightning tree' from an Ugaritic passage:

sb't.brqm.x[. . .] t̄mnt.išr r't. 'š brq.y[. . .]

KTU, 1.101 3-4

Seven lightnings [. . .], eight stores(?) of (?) . . . he(?)

[. . .] the tree of(?) lightning.

This is obscure because the meaning of *r't* is unknown, and the incompleteness of the final word quoted means that while 'tree of lightning' is possible, the two words could be related in some other way. Trees and lightning have so little in common that the phrase as rendered is curious. A second passage referred to in this connection is:

'n.b'1.qdm.ydh

The eye of Baal precedes his hand

k tgd.arz.b ymnh

when the cedar/pine is . . . in his right hand.

KTU, 1.4 vii 40-41

In the context this certainly refers to Baal attacking, perhaps by throwing a spear, though some uncertainty is created by the verb of unknown meaning in the second line. However, the tree named need not imply a whole tree as in nature, but might refer to a weapon made of its wood.

In art Baal on occasions holds up a tree without there being any snake apparently impaled on it,³⁹ and in these cases it is certainly a symbol for identification. Its use as a weapon is not completely sure.

The snake, as already observed, is entirely naturalistic and so gives no hint of its name and identity. Williams-Forte proposes that it be identified with the Ugaritic Mot, god of death. One argument for this proposition is that two Anatolian-style seals from Kultepe impressions show Baal holding a limp snake by the neck while its tail is hidden within two mountains on which Baal's foot rests,⁴⁰ so the mountains, signifying the nether world, are the snake's home. This, we suggest, is again over-interpretation of juxtaposition in art. The end of the snake does indeed abut upon the mountains, but its visible length does not suggest that any substantial part is invisible. On a Syrian seal (Williams-Forte, op. cit., fig. 10), which shows Baal spearing the snake apparently with the tree, the end of the snake again abuts upon the mountain, but is thinner at the point of contact, so there is no reason to suspect that any part of it is meant to be understood as inside the mountain. In the cases where there is no visible thin-

³⁹ See n. 3.

⁴⁰ Williams-Forte, op. cit., 25 ff. However, there is a third, similar Anatolian Group impression of Baal holding the limp snake where the end might touch the mountain: Özgüç, no. 70 = T. and N. Özgüç, *Kultepe Kazisi Raporu*, 1949, pl. 64, no. 718. Also an actual seal of this type not noticed is *CANES*, 894, where the lower part of the snake, correctly identified as such by E. Porada, is not visible due to damage. No. 42 in the Seyrig Collection, a seal published for the first time by Williams-Forte, op. cit., pl. 1, fig. 2 and on the cover, is described by her as 'Syrian', but though it obviously draws on Syrian motifs and shows Baal with one foot on a live snake, it is equally obviously not of Syrian workmanship. The details of execution are not typically Syrian, and, in contrast to Syrian workmanship, the engraver had no idea how to fill the space. Note how the tree, whirling weapon and bird overlap while there is abundant empty space elsewhere. Also, if the combined lunar crescent and disc are really meant to be Baal's headgear, as they appear to be, this is totally inconceivable in the world of Syro-Mesopotamian religion. The combined crescent and disc were an accepted grouping of the symbols of the sun god and moon god, but no one figure, human or divine, could properly carry both on his head. However, technically, the engraving is well done and one is forced to the conclusion that either this is an ancient seal cut in an area where Syrian art was known but not understood, or it is a modern forgery.

ning of the body, it is possible that the artist meant the end to be thought of as behind the mountain, not inside it, if indeed one should press such questions.

The mountains are not so obscure. In well-known Hittite art, such as Yazilikaya,⁴¹ Teshub stands on two mountain gods named Namni and Ḫazzi, both real mountains, though only the latter is certainly identified, as the classical Mons Casius in north Syria. This is in fact Baal's one mountain in the Ugaritic texts, there under the same Ṣapānu, which passed into the Old Testament as Ṣāphōn. Why, then, on Syrian seals, is Baal shown with his feet on two mountains, which was the Anatolian tradition? It is always possible of course that the artistic motif originated in Anatolia and was borrowed in Syria, where the literary tradition accepted only one. In any case the two could be considered peaks of a single mountain: one for each foot. Also two Syrian seals do not support the common type: no. 476 of the Marcopoli Collection⁴² shows Baal standing on a single, undivided block of mountain, and *CANES*, 968 shows the two feet on one peak each, but inserts a higher peak connecting the two shorter ones. The mountains Ṣapānu and Namni are not known to have had nether-world connexions,⁴³ so the idea that the snake defeated by Baal in art is Mot cannot be sustained on this ground. There is one Ugaritic passage naming two mountains:

‘m.ḡr.trḡzz / ‘m.ḡr.trmg toward mount trḡzz, toward mount trmg
KTU, 1.4 viii 2-3

From the context it is clear that these are two mountains on the edge of the world by the entrance to the nether world. However, it would be entirely wrong to identify the two mountains beneath Baal's feet in art with these. In the story Baal sends envoys to this remote region, not going himself, and since in art Baal most commonly stands on the two mountains without there being any trace of a snake, they can only be meant to identify him, and for that Ṣapānu in Syria and Namni and Ḫazzi in Anatolia are clearly meant.

There are unambiguous references to Baal's defeat of a snake in the Ugaritic myths:⁴⁴

k tmḥṣ.ltn.bṭn.brḥ	When you smote <i>ltn</i> , the . . . snake,
tkly.bṭn.‘qltn.	finished off the twisting snake,
šlyṭ.d.sb‘t.rasm	šlyṭ of the seven heads . . .

KTU, 1.5 i 1-3

⁴¹ Also on Hittite seals: *AnSt*, 25, 144-5, figs. 1-4; C. F.-A. Schaeffer, *Ugaritica*, III, pp. 24 f., figs. 32-3; pp. 48 f., figs. 66-7; p. 50, figs. 68-9.

⁴² B. Teissier, *Ancient Near Eastern cylinder seals from the Marcopoli Collection*, 242; cf. T. J. Meek, *BASOR*, 90 25, no. 2. An address in Hurrian (found at Boghaz-köy) to Teshub of Aleppo (*KUB* 47 78, see H.-J. Thiel and I. Wegner, *Studi Micenei ed Egeo-anatolici* 24, 1984, 187-213) connects him in i 3 with Namni and Ḫazzi: *nam-ni-ra-am ḫa-zi-ra-am* 'You with Namni, you with Ḫazzi'. This address was presumably recited during rites somewhere, but not necessarily in Aleppo. But one would expect the priests of Teshub in Aleppo to be familiar with its content, in which case the Hurrian tradition of the two mountains of Baal would have co-existed in Syria with the Semitic tradition of one mountain at this time. The god in question under his Semitic name is probably known from the Ebla archive as: *ḳà-da* (lú) *ḫa-lam*^{k1} (G. Pettinato, *OA* 18, 1979, 209, etc.) 'Adda of (the place) Ḫalam'. There seems to be no reason why Ḫalam at Ebla should not be Aleppo.

⁴³ In the Ugaritic Baal texts a battle takes place between Baal and Mot on this mountain, but it is clearly Baal's home, not Mot's; see R. J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament*, 59-60.

⁴⁴ Mot is addressing Baal in the first excerpt quoted, mentioning the latter's victories. In the second excerpt Anat is addressing Baal, and from the context it is clear that she is not claiming for herself victories that were in fact Baal's, but is meaning that she assisted Baal in his achieving of them.

On the view that *ltn* and *šlyt* are names, we take the first two lines to refer to a single snake, the third to a separate monster. This interpretation is confirmed by a listing of more of Baal's enemies in another text:

mḥšt.bṭn.ʿqltn	I smote the twisting snake,
šlyt.d.sbʿt.rašm	šlyt of the seven heads . . .

KTU, 1.3 iii 41–42

The lack here of the first line of the previous quotation when the listing in the whole context is much fuller implies abbreviation in wording but not in substance. This conclusion is confirmed by the later use of this language as metaphor in Isaiah 27:1: '*al liwyātān nāhāš bārīq̄h wʿal liwyātān nāhāš ʿaḡallātōn* ' 'against Leviathan, the . . . snake, yes, against Leviathan, the twisting snake'. This, then, is presumably the snake being speared by Baal in art, and there is so far no ground for identifying it with Mot.⁴⁵

Neither the Syrian and Anatolian art, nor the Ugaritic texts explain the background of this battle, so there is no basis for comparing this snake with the seducer in the garden of Eden. Snakes are too common in both the art and the literature of the ancient Near East for this one to have particular relevance to Genesis, though it is the basis for certain Hebrew poetic imagery.⁴⁶

One further possibly related item occurs on the Anatolian-style seals known from impressions on Kültepe tablets for the most part. Baal often stands with his back against what might be described as a tree in cross-section. It has a vertical 'trunk' which normally tapers slightly toward the top, and on the side away from Baal parallel strokes extend from its side, usually on the upper part only, suggestive of branches. In detail the known examples vary considerably.⁴⁷ Williams-Forte describes them, following Özgüç, as 'cones' that rest on the backs of bulls supporting the weather god' (p. 26). This is misinterpretation of juxtaposed items. On some occasions the bulls in question are standing in front of the mysterious objects, so that their lower portions are hidden, but there are sufficient examples where this is not so and their bases are then exposed.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Psalm 74:14 has a plural 'heads of Leviathan' in the Masoretic text, which would exclude the Anatolian and Syrian depictions as showing this creature. However, the plural depends entirely on a *mater lectionis*, and there is a little LXX evidence for the singular 'head'. The Leviathans of Job 40:25 and Psalm 104:26 are generally agreed to be real animals, to be distinguished from the one named in Isaiah 27 and Psalm 74.

⁴⁶ In Sumerian and Akkadian the god whose name is written with the sign MUŠ ('snake'), to be read either Nirah or Irhan, is the cosmic river, and little narrative myth about him can be found. For the reading of the name see G. J. P. McEwan, *Or.* 52, 1983, 215–29, and M. Krebernik, *Die Beschwörungen aus Fara und Ebla*, 298–300. The former assumes, doubtfully in the view of the present writer, that the sign-group DIN.BALAG.DAR, etc., joins with MUŠ as one logogram for Irhan. More likely the signs add up to a second element of the name. McEwan prefers Nirah as the normal form because (i) this was asserted by Landsberger, (ii) because it is proved for Old Assyrian personal names, and (iii) because an exercise tablet from Ur quoting Šurpu writes *ni-ra-hu* for 'MUŠ of other copies. But the Old Assyrian writing system is so distinctive that one should not extrapolate from it for the Babylonian literary tradition, and an exercise tablet is never the safest authority for anything. The present writer suspects that the normal Babylonian literary reading is Irhan, because of the bulk of the evidence in favour of it, not all of which is quoted by McEwan, who, having asserted on his first page that *ni-ra-hu* = Nirah, assumes that this is true everywhere throughout the rest of the article. Since *nirahu* is a common noun in Akkadian for 'small snake', it could have been used as an epithet of the snake-god.

⁴⁷ See Özgüç 17, 19, 21, 26, 28, 29, 30, 39, 64, 65, 70, 71; B. Hrozný, *ICK*, I, pl. lxx 35a C; L. Matouš and M. Matoušová-Rajmová, *Kappadokische Keilschrifttafeln mit Siegeln* (henceforth 'KKS') p. 181 105; *CCT*, VI, pl. 49 14; O. White Muscarella, op. cit., no. 128; L. Speleers, *Catalogue des intailles . . . des Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire*, Supplément, 153.

⁴⁸ L. Speleers, op. cit., loc. cit.; B. Hrozný, *ICK*, I, pl. lxx 35a C; O. White Muscarella, op. cit., no. 128.

Also, the shape does not justify the term 'cone'. There are things which can legitimately be called cones on the backs of bulls on seals of the 'Old Assyrian Group' especially,⁴⁹ but the item under discussion is totally unrelated. Williams-Forte further interprets the impressions showing Baal holding a limp snake as showing the snakes with 'a branch-like element' rising from their heads 'probably representing the god's lightning' (p. 26). The 'branch-like' element is what we consider the 'branches' extending from the side of the 'trunk', and the 'trunk' in these cases is not shown as hidden by Baal's back. In our view it is coincidence that the snake's head is adjacent to the lowest 'branch'. The correctness of this interpretation of the 'branches' in the three cases where no 'trunk' is visible is confirmed by the occurrence of almost vertical parallel lines above and in front of Baal's head in one of these cases.⁵⁰ These lines occur commonly with the 'tree' which serves as a backdrop to Baal. As with other aspects of this setting for the god, there is considerable variation in detail. In Özgüç 29 there are in fact two 'branches' above Baal's head which match the many more on the opposite side of the 'trunk', and in addition there is the block of vertical strokes which reach down in front of Baal's face. They are clearly not part of the 'tree'. But on Özgüç, 39 they are so similar to the 'branches' that they look related to the 'tree'.⁵¹ Also, an oblong object appears beneath them. On a stamp seal from Achemhöyük,⁵² a single line runs the full length of the back of the 'trunk', then bends over to create a 'bower' in which Baal stands on his bull. From this line there are two blocks of parallel strokes, clearly intended to look alike: one from the back of the 'tree', the usual 'branches', the other from above and in front of the god, which end in an oblong object. It is very doubtful whether this backdrop for the storm god represents any natural object. It might have been a cultic setting for statues of the god in ancient shrines, whether the 'tree' was an object manufactured so to serve, or whether the wall behind the statue and the ceiling above were decorated in this way.⁵³ Williams-Forte suggests that the lines above Baal may represent rain, and this is possible, though if accepted, we would feel that the almost horizontal lines behind Baal would then also have to be considered a representa-

⁴⁹ e.g. *CANES*, 855-62.

⁵⁰ Özgüç, 70, 71 and *CANES*, 894 are the three, and Özgüç, 71, has the nearly vertical lines above.

⁵¹ There are several distinct kinds of tree held by Baal, and one (T. and N. Özgüç, *Kultepe Kazisi Raporu*, 1949, pl. 62, nos. 691-2), consisting of a central pole with a narrow oblong or wavy band at the top and upturning protrusions just beneath, seems to be the same as a sort of standard in Mitanni seals (C. F.-A. Schaeffer-Forrer, *Corpus*, I, p. 100, 8.448 and p. 135, 23.479; E. Porada, *AASOR*, 24, no. 98), and what appears to be the top of this 'standard' can appear as vertical lines descending from a top line on a short support (Schaeffer-Forrer, op. cit., p. 89, 6.389; Porada, op. cit., nos. 95 and 547; D. Collon, *The Alalakh cylinder seals*, no. 85; *Iraq*, 11, pl. xviii 123; *ZA*, 52 187, Abb. 77). In Mitanni seals both this and the common stylized tree can occur on one and the same seal (of the preceding list: Porada, 95; *ZA*, 52 187; cf. Collon, no. 75). This need not necessarily imply two different gods: in northern Mesopotamia and Syria local variants of the same god could receive offerings simultaneously from the same person. The relevance of this material here is that the band of parallel lines above Baal in his 'arbor' resemble one side of the top of this symbol in Özgüç, 39, 65 and 71, but in view of the difference in time it would be unwise to affirm a connexion without further evidence. Another type of tree has three to five pairs of branches (Williams-Forte's figs. 8-10 and 13; also Schaeffer-Forrer, *Corpus*, I, 62 A9), and this tree is held by a seated god on an Akkadian seal (*BN*, 79), where a reared-up goat rests its front paws on the seated god's knees, cf. Briggs Buchanan, *Early Near Eastern seals*, 473. It is not clear whether the goat is meant to be eating the foliage or serves only as further identification for the god. There seems to be no way of determining whether this god is Adad. The Yale seal shows him holding what Buchanan interprets as 'three ears of grain', but they could equally be three twigs.

⁵² N. Özgüç, apud E. Porada (ed.), *Ancient art in seals*, p. 94, III-24.

⁵³ It is worth recalling that the Hebrew cult symbol Ashera was of wood, and was erected at altars. Some scholars have thought it was a tree or stump.

tion of rain, which is less probable. So for the present there is no sure interpretation of the 'bower' of Baal, though because it occurs with no other deity and because Baal never holds a tree in his hand when standing with this backdrop, it is possible that it was meant as a stylized tree to identify the god.⁵⁴

In the preceding discussion we have oversimplified by using the name Baal for the storm god in both Syria and Anatolia, though it is only correct for the former area. J. H. Deighton's study (see n. 15 above), whatever its limitations, should caution us against too ready an identification of storm gods, even in adjacent areas, in all their aspects and attributes. Anatolian Tarḥunna, if that was in fact his name, may have differed in some particulars from Syrian Baal. Williams-Forte's work covered not only storm gods, but also water gods, though in the published article very little space is devoted to a god of terrestrial water. As with the storm god, one important observation is made, though again it cannot be accepted without considerable qualification. All the figures depicted in the Anatolian Group seals need a detailed treatment, which would easily occupy a whole book. N. Özgüç made a brief initial survey (pp. 59-74), but though it was a useful start, it was too brief, faulty in some of its observations and conclusions, and did not go into necessary ramifications of the background. We have no intention to treat the whole subject at length, but since one figure has been singled out and identified as a water god, we shall deal with water gods alone. The owners of Anatolian Group seals were normally Assyrian traders living in Cappadocia. It appears that there were no skilled seal cutters trained in Mesopotamian glyptic working in Cappadocia, as one assumes there were in Assyria. Thus locally trained stone engravers were employed there to cut seals. The various groups distinguished: Özgüç's Old Assyrian, Old Babylonian (Porada's Provincial Babylonian), Syrian Colony and Anatolian Group, are styles developed by schools of craftsmen, all no doubt working in Anatolia. While the Old Assyrian style contains some purely Anatolian motifs, it is generally characterized by crude copies of Mesopotamian motifs. Thus, while contemporary Syrian seals appear to reflect only Syrian ideology, with of course foreign influences at work in it, the seals cut for Assyrians in Anatolia need not reflect only current Anatolian ideas. Those have to be obtained by sifting out foreign elements (as distinct from foreign influences at work in Anatolian religion), and this is a delicate procedure.

The Anatolian Group is characterized by a glorious *mélange* of motifs from every quarter in vast quantity. Those borrowed from Mesopotamia are best known and so the easiest to disentangle. Thus the storm god, so identified from the forked lightning he may bear, stands variously on a plain or winged lion or on a bull.⁵⁵ The winged lion as the storm god's mount was taken directly or indirectly from the lion-griffin of Old Akkadian seals,⁵⁶ or other art forms of

⁵⁴ In *CANES*, 1094, an Old Syrian seal c. 2000 B.C., the bull, symbol of the storm god, stands on a podium behind which some kind of structure depicted in linear fashion rises and then bends over at right angles above the body of the bull. This might be related to the backdrop of Baal just discussed. Three Elamite seals from the first few centuries of the second millennium show a seated figure under a real tree or plant that rises behind the figure and bends over to form a sort of roof: P. Amiet, *Glyptique súsienne*, 1899; J. G. Volk, *Habib Anavian Collection*, 125; London auction catalogue: Christie's, *Fine antiquities*, 12 Dec. 1984, p. 81, no. 318. While it is not impossible that the cultic structures of Elam and Anatolia had things in common, too little is understood of the Elamite depictions to make a serious comparison.

⁵⁵ *Passim* on a bull; on a lion, e.g. Özgüç, 2 and 9; L. Speleers, op. cit., p. 152; on a winged lion, Özgüç, 11-13. Of these last three the first has a vestigial wing, while the other two show a rearrangement of the Akkadian wings which serves as a kind of footstool. However, the drooping heads of all these lions confirm their descent from the Akkadian prototype.

⁵⁶ R. M. Boehmer, *Die Entwicklung*, Abb. 362-374.

that period no longer extant. The bull appears in Old Babylonian and Syrian seals and was certainly associated with the storm god in Anatolia long before the Assyrian traders were settled. It seems that there are never two storm gods shown on a single seal, one on a bull, the other on a lion, so the craftsmen and their clients must presumably have understood the various glyptic traditions to refer to one and the same god. Another deity with a specific Mesopotamian background is Enki/Ea, god of the Apsû, a subterranean lake believed by Sumerians and Babylonians to exist beneath the earth, and to supply all springs with water. This concept seems peculiar to the Sumero-Babylonian world, so the attentions to the god in other cultural areas such as Anatolia demand explanation. A Mesopotamian Enki/Ea is not easily identified in the Anatolian Group since the associated streams of water and fishes found in Akkadian art occur very rarely in this Anatolian material with a suitable figure. However, his symbolic animal in Mesopotamia, the fish-goat, which is used to identify him in Old Babylonian seals, where it shows up under his feet, similarly appears to identify the deity in the Anatolian Group.⁵⁷ Since it is apparently never so used in Akkadian art, and very rarely in Ur III,⁵⁸ it reflects a different stage of Mesopotamian art from the storm god's lion. Two minor gods from Ea's court are more readily identified in the Anatolian Group: his double-faced vizier Isimû/Usmû and the bull-man.

Unlike the fish-goat, the two-faced vizier commonly occurs on Akkadian seals, but is totally absent from Ur III, Old Babylonian and, apparently, Syrian seals.⁵⁹ However, the Anatolian artists may identify this deity, not only by his double face, but also by streams of water flowing from his body (Özgüç, 1, 3), a device used with Ea but not with his vizier in Akkadian seals. So the Anatolians correctly understood the two-faced figure as Ea's vizier, but decided that further confirmation of identity was necessary. Occasionally this deity stands on the back of a boar, something unknown in Mesopotamia, so obviously there was a local Anatolian god with whom Usmû was identified.

Another figure in the Anatolian group similarly identified by the flowing streams is the bull-man, a bull most commonly depicted as standing on two legs and having a human face, *gud.alim* in Sumerian, *kusarikku* in Akkadian. He has a long history in Mesopotamia, but in this context it is unnecessary to go back further than the end of Early Dynastic. Most commonly then and in the following Akkadian dynasty, he appears in contest scenes, and often his comrade there is the *Laḫmu*,⁶⁰ the nude hero with three curls either side of the face and a triple-stranded belt around his waist. Elsewhere in Akkadian glyptic the *Laḫmu* appears in association with Ea, holding the so-called gate-post, and later Sumerian literary texts attest a plurality of *Laḫmus* as Ea's constabulary. Also the god 'Laḫmu-of-the-Apsû' is Ea's gatekeeper. The bull-man also appears on Akkadian seals holding the same gate-post, but not in association with Ea, though once with Shamash.⁶¹ Indeed, he is elsewhere associated with Shamash not infrequently.⁶² One Akkadian seal shows the sun god grabbing a bull-man from behind, and in another two, a pair of recumbent bull-men rest on the

⁵⁷ For Old Babylonian examples, see U. Seidl, *Bagh. Mitt.*, iv, 178 ff.; for the Anatolian Style examples see Özgüç, 14 (more fully in the drawing in *CCT*, vi, pl. 48 4) and 15.

⁵⁸ See U. Seidl, loc. cit.

⁵⁹ *RLA*, v, 179 ff.

⁶⁰ The *Laḫmu* has been certainly identified by F. A. M. Wiggermann, *JEOL*, 27, 1983, 90 ff., and a forthcoming monograph by him will take up the *gud.alim/kusarikku* and related matters.

⁶¹ D. E. McCown and R. C. Haines, *Nippur*, 1 [*OIP* 78], pl. 109 11.

⁶² See M. R. Behm-Blancke, *Das Tierbild in der altesopotamischen Rundplastik*, 51.

mountain of the east as the sun god rises.⁶³ In Old Babylonian seals the bull-man appears under the feet of the seated sun god as identification (CS, XXVII a), and a standing one holding a pole surmounted by the solar disc occurs from Old to Late Babylonian times,⁶⁴ though pairs of bull-men may also occur holding symbols of other gods (CANES, 421, etc.).

Against this background it seems strange that in the Anatolian Group the bull-man, though occurring *passim* in a stereotyped contest with a single lion, also commonly appears (Özgüç, 5, 7, 8, 11, 32, 33, etc.) either standing or kneeling with streams of water coming from his shoulders or, rarely, waist (op. cit., 54), something apparently unknown in Mesopotamian art. The explanation is that these Anatolian artists have merged the bull-man and the Laḫmu. Mesopotamian evidence helps to explain this. In Akkadian, Ur III and Old Babylonian contests the two types often occur together, one each in matching pairs of lion or bovine versus Laḫmu or bull-man. Similarly, either may hold even the same standard, so their functions appear to coincide. Even their faces, when shown frontally, as most often, may be quite similar (e.g. CANES, 144). However, in Mesopotamia they are carefully distinguished, and in other than the Anatolian Group at Kültepe. The streams of water can appear with the Laḫmu in Old Babylonian seals (CS, XXVII k, XXVIII g, k), similarly on Syrian seals (e.g. Moortgat, VR no. 545), and in the Provincial Babylonian Group (CANES, 864; Louvre, A 884; CCT, VI, pl. 56 73, and 58 84). The penultimate of these is particularly important as showing a Laḫmu joined to the seated god with feet on fish-goat by a stream of water, while a clearly distinguished bull-man is grappling with a lion. Thus the Anatolian Group has made a break with its spiritual ancestry and with its contemporaries in merging the Laḫmu in the bull-man. The only slight concession to the absorbed figure is that occasionally the limbs of the bull-man below the waist are more human than bovine (e.g. Özgüç, 40: the contestant), though there is nearly always a tail. There was presumably something in the Anatolian world to explain this development, so any non-Mesopotamian features of the Anatolian bull-man must be scrutinized for indications. Rarely, the bull-man stands on the back of a bull (Özgüç, 32, 33), like Baal. Also rarely, pairs of bull-men hold up on a sort of tray the bull with cone on his back, a symbol from the Assyrian Group (Özgüç, 38–40), while a single bull-man similarly supports that unidentified symbol, the creature commonly called a mongoose, but perhaps a monkey (Özgüç, 67, 74). There is Mesopotamian background in bull-men holding up divine symbols generally, but not these particular items. The Anatolian background is seen at Yazilikaya, where Teshub's two bulls, Seri and Hurri, hold up the lunar crescent. In Tell Halaf relief sculpture and commonly in first millennium seals, Assyrian, Babylonian and Achaemenid, two bull-men hold up the winged solar disc.⁶⁵ There is one common denominator here: Baal as seen in the thunder clouds and lightning, and the moon and sun are alike phenomena of the skies. They needed support, which was a function of minor gods. It is therefore a reasonable conclusion that the known Hurrian tradition of the storm god's two bulls in his entourage is based on an older Anatolian tradition, in the light of which the Mesopotamian pair of Laḫmu and bull-man were merged in the one type, which

⁶³ Briggs Buchanan, *Early Near Eastern Seals*, no. 436; P. Amiet, *Glyptique susienne*, no. 1563; *Propyläen Kunstgeschichte*, xiv, p. 239, fig. 44d.

⁶⁴ e.g. H. Frankfort, *Cylinder seals* (henceforth 'CS'), pl. xxvii k; CANES 366; PBS, xiv, 710. The last bears the inscription ^azi-ku, a name of Marduk in Enūma Eliš, VII 19 and elsewhere, but it is difficult to believe that this bull-man is so being identified as Marduk.

⁶⁵ W. G. Lambert, *Iraq*, 41, 1979 35–6.

could appear in pairs when necessary. The Mesopotamian bull-men are not known to have had any connexion with Adad, so the Laḫmu with streams of water was also needed. How far this requires the conscious recognition on the part of the ancient Anatolians that the water here is terrestrial as connected with Ea, and so the storm god must have been concerned with such water, is a difficult question. But surely some of the ancients must have reasoned that the continual falling of water from the skies requires that the supply up there be replenished from time to time from water down here, and in this way the storm god would have been involved somehow with terrestrial water.

Teshub's two bulls holding up the moon have no Mesopotamian background. At first in Mesopotamia, two bull-men hold up the sun-disc on a pole, and this gives the impression of cultic practice. The statue of the sun god was far too precious to be freely available for devotions from the commonalty of the population, so symbols served, and mounted on poles they were most practical and portable. Mythologically, of course, minor gods carried them. This stage is commonly attested in Old Babylonian and Mitanni art, but in some Mitanni and Middle Assyrian art, followed by the first millennium art of Mesopotamia, there is most commonly no longer any pole and mythological figures support the winged solar disc by holding it up by the ends of the wings. This is presumably meant as a cosmological demonstration of why the sun does not fall from the skies, and we would argue that the change resulted from north-Mesopotamian influence of Hurrian origin. Reasons are that, as with the sacred tree, the texts are, it seems, completely silent on this pair of *kusarikkus* holding up the sun, which is inexplicable if it were a traditional Mesopotamian concept, and secondly that the Hurrian pair of bulls, Seri and Hurri, were worshipped at Assur⁶⁶ (and no doubt elsewhere in Mesopotamia) so that knowledge of this Hurrian and Anatolian concept was certainly around.

Thus the Anatolian Group offers three deities connected with water, apart from the storm god himself: the two-faced god, originally Ea's vizier, and the bull-man with merged Laḫmu which, in pairs, became divine bulls in the storm god's court. Williams-Forte would like to add one more to this group of gods with watery associations. She observes that, when Baal is shown standing on a bull, another deity similarly mounted quite commonly precedes him. This preceding deity, however, is never armed, but if holding anything, is holding a cup. It is argued that because of accompanying fish and streams of water he is a water god, of 'earthly, as opposed to heavenly, waters' (p. 24). Apart from some inaccuracy in detail, this is substantially a questionable proposition. In the eleven examples of the unarmed god in front of Baal,⁶⁷ once a fish is equidistant from this deity's mount and a lion under the feet of the facing deity (Özgüç, 71), once a fish appears between this god's mount and the preceding deer (KKS, 181 105), and once there is an indistinct mark which could be a fish similarly between this deity's mount and the deer on which the god in front is riding (Özgüç, 65). Then, in Özgüç, 11, there appears 'the nude hero with streams that kneels on his rein' (Williams-Forte, p. 25). In fact this is the bull-man (note the bull's ears and broad thighs) and his position above (sic!) Baal's reins is surely space-filling rather than a demonstration of trapeze artistry. As noted by Williams-Forte, two other seals, certainly from the same school and possibly from the same artist, show the nude goddess throwing back her cloak in

⁶⁶ R. Frankena, *Tākalu*, p. 92 75; B. Menzel, *Assyrische Tempel*, I, 67 and notes.

⁶⁷ Özgüç, 19-20, 26, 28, 31, 64, 65, 70, 71; *ICK*, I, pl. lxx 35a C; *KKS*, p. 181 105; L. Speleers, op. cit., 153.

place of the bull-man, that is, above the reins. She has no demonstrable connexion with water. Thus the alleged watery association of the unarmed god who precedes Baal is altogether doubtful, and other items which do commonly occur around the god as depicted, e.g. a bird, are ignored.

However, there remains the important discovery that this deity, whatever his identification, quite regularly precedes Baal in the Anatolian Group. The cup he often carries was borrowed from Mesopotamian art, but has no value for identification since in the Anatolian Group different types of gods can carry it. The dress is likewise shared by many gods and thus unhelpful. So, like Williams-Forte, we have to work from the lack of any weapon and his pre-eminence over Baal as shown by his preceding rather than following. Such precedence suggests at once paternity. It seems that no father of Tarhunna is known in Hattian religion, but in the Hurrian sphere, Kumarbi is of course Teshub's father. Myths give virtually no information about his cosmic attributes, but he cannot be identified with the figure on a bull preceding Baal in the Anatolian Group. First, in the Hittite succession myth he seized power from his father Anu by force, and in the Ullikummi story he deliberately gave birth to the giant rock in the attempt to crush his earlier son, Teshub, who was king at the time, though this attempt failed. He was not a peaceful father of Baal to go in front of his son unarmed. However, this creates no difficulty because the Hurrian penetration of Anatolia occurred after the period of the Anatolian Group and these Hittite myths are clearly based on Hurrian stories, themselves blended from (probably) originally Hurrian material and Sumero-Babylonian mythology with an admixture of north-Mesopotamian elements.

However, the Ugaritic myths offer an equally valid basis of comparison. Here, though Baal is frequently called 'son of Dagān', El is referred to as his father, and later Phoenician sources both confirm and suggest an explanation of this apparent contradiction.⁶⁸ In the Ugaritic myths El is the most senior god and rules the younger generation like a benign patriarch. Though bearing the epithet 'bull' (*tr*) he is no warrior. This fits so perfectly the figure who precedes Baal in the Anatolian Group that it justifies a hypothesis that in Hattian religion at Kultepe the storm god's father corresponded to El in Syrian religion. The Ugaritic texts are of course known only from copies written half a millennium later than the Anatolian Group, though the traditions they present may, of course, be much older. The evidence of Ebla from about the middle of the third millennium shows that some of the gods of the Ugaritic pantheon were already well established more than a millennium earlier: Adad, El, Dagān and Resheph, to cite the best known and most easily identified. The biggest known factor making for change in Syria over this millennium was the arrival of the Amorites at about the end of the third millennium. They brought a new name for the moon god, Yrḥ, but, being nomads, may have not altered fundamentally the established cults of the sedentary population. Thus it is entirely possible that the positions of El and Baal in the Ugaritic pantheon may reflect a status quo of great antiquity, and that they had close parallels in Anatolian religion. We would not press El's Ugaritic epithet 'bull' in this connexion, but would compare the way in which the *mušhuššu* serves as the symbolic animal of both Marduk and his son Nabû in Mesopotamia.

One further question must be asked. If, as we propose, the two deities in sequence both riding on bulls are father and son, should they not have some common attributes? The son is certainly god of the upper cosmic water.

⁶⁸ H. W. Haussig (ed.), *Wörterbuch der Mythologie*, i. 255 f.

According to the Ugaritic myths El lived in 'the sources of the (two) rivers, within the springs of the (two) seas' (*mbk nhrm qrb apq thmtm*), which is the nearest Syrian equivalent to the Sumerian Apsû. In considering the Mari pantheon, the present author, independently of any Anatolian considerations, concluded that Enki/Ea at Mari was a cover-name for El of the Syrian pantheon.⁶⁹ Perhaps, then, Williams-Forte was right to identify this god as a water god, if for the wrong reasons. However, more Anatolian evidence must be awaited to settle this matter.

In conclusion, it is clear that Williams-Forte has made two observations of major importance: that Baal occasionally carries a tree as an identifying symbol, and that a particular unidentified god precedes him heraldically in the Anatolian Group. Certain details of the presentation may be disputed, and the relevance of the tree and of the snake killed by Baal for the garden of Eden has yet to be established. But in other aspects of ancient Near Eastern art and religion these observations may prove to have far-reaching consequences.

⁶⁹ In 'The Pantheon of Mari' to appear in *MARI*, IV.